Ministry of Agriculture

Farm & Food Report

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Saskatchewan

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FCC AGRI-SPIRIT FUND ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is once again providing $500,000 through its AgriSpirit Fund to support capital projects in rural communities across the country.

The AgriSpirit Fund was established in 2004. "We saw a real need to support communities, especially in their capital projects," said Brenda Stasuik, Manager of Corporate Responsibility.

"Places like the local rink are central locations for people to get together. We wanted a way to accept applications for all the good stuff that's going on out there from these volunteers, and then be able to support them."

Stasuik also notes that FCC's clients and employees are spread throughout rural Canada, and the AgriSpirit Fund provides an ideal opportunity to support their efforts.

The fund will be accepting applications for 2008 between May 1 and June 16. Successful applicants will be notified in October.

To be eligible, an organization must be set up for charitable purposes, be an agricultural society, or be partnered with a municipal government that agrees to handle the financial management of the project.

Grants of between $5,000 and $25,000 are available for community improvement projects involving construction, renovation and/or the purchase of necessary equipment. Examples include rural community centres, recreation centres, sports facilities, playgrounds, care homes, food banks and emergency service units.

To maintain its rural focus, FCC stipulates that the fund is only available to communities of under 100,000 people. No community is too small to apply.

To date, FCC has funded 180 capital projects for a total of $1.8 million. In Saskatchewan, an amount of $392,200 has been allocated.

"We see this as a really important thing to be doing out there for rural Canada. We received more than 700 applications last year, so that's an indication that people are passionate about their communities and we're happy to help them out," Stasuik said.

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All applications are to be submitted online through the program's website, http://www.agrispirit.ca/. Interested applicants will also find on the site details of the fund's eligibility criteria, application process, success stories and answers to some of the more common questions.

Headquartered in Regina, FCC is Canada's largest provider of business and financial services to farms and agri-businesses. For more information on the corporation and its operations, visit http://www.fcc-fac.ca/.

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